



# TREASURY DEPARTMENT

UNITED STATES MINT SERVICE

PHILADELPHIA 30, PA.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT  
UNITED STATES MINT

April 30, 1964

Miss Eva B. Adams  
Director of the Mint  
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Miss Adams:

In response to your telephone request of April 27, 1964, enclosed are Mr. Roberts' and Mr. Gasparro's recollections on the production of the President Kennedy half dollar. It is understood that this is to be directed to the attention of Miss Hayden.

Very truly yours,

Acting Superintendent

Enclosure

4-29-64

REMINISCENCES ON THE CREATION OF THE KENNEDY HALF DOLLAR

*Gerry Adams*

Shortly after the tragedy of President Kennedy's death, November 22, 1963, Miss Eva Adams, the Director of the Mint, telephoned me here at the Philadelphia Mint and explained that serious consideration was being given to placing President Kennedy's portrait on a new design U. S. silver coin and that the Quarter Dollar, Half Dollar or the One Dollar were under discussion. For the design, they were weighing the merits of either a front view or a profile for the obverse and the possibility of using the President's Seal of Office for the reverse. From the standpoint of good composition and elegance of design the profile is much superior to any other view for the presentation of a portrait in bas-relief on a circular medal or coin. This is almost a universally held opinion among designers and artists and it was strongly recommended here that a profile be used.

A day or so later, about November 27th, Miss Adams called again and informed me that the Half Dollar had been chosen for the new design, that Mrs. Kennedy did not want to replace Washington's portrait on the Quarter Dollar. Also it had been decided to use the profile portrait that appears on our Mint list medal for President Kennedy and the President's Seal that had been used on the reverse of this and other Mint medals.

Since the Franklin Half Dollar had not been issued for the statutory twenty-five year period, new legislative authority would be required. However, we were to begin immediately because they wanted to start striking the new Half Dollar in January, 1964, only about four weeks away. This seemed almost an impossibility, but the fact that we had, on hand, large models for both sides made the problem less insurmountable. There was still a great amount of work to be done, all stops were out. Mr. Gasparro tackled the reverse and the obverse became my problem.

Starting back with the original plastilene model of President Kennedy's portrait, which he had approved, the coat was deleted, the periphery was changed to bring the head nearer center and to decrease the size of the circle in relation to the portrait. The background was reshaped to provide the required depressed field necessary for proper coinage, the inscription and date required by law were established.

On December 10th, White House press releases were issued by President Johnson stating the reasons and the steps required to establish the new coin.

Work on the processing to the die stage continued. An intermediate reduction was made, approximately five inches in diameter, drastically reducing the relief and from this intermediate, preliminary trial dies with further reduction in relief were made. On December 13th, trial strikes were produced and these were immediately delivered to Miss Adams in Washington.

The following week, December 15th, Miss Adams requested my presence in Washington to discuss the new Half Dollar with her and with other Treasury Department officials.

Both sides of the trial strikes received very favorable comment; however, Secretary of the Treasury Dillon wished to have Mrs. Kennedy's opinion and wanted me to accompany him at that time. On December 17th, we met Mrs. Kennedy and Attorney General Robert Kennedy. Mrs. Kennedy was favorably impressed with the design on both sides of the coin but felt it would be an improvement if the part in the hair, on the portrait, was less pronounced and more accents were added. They also had in mind a design showing a full figure or half figure of the late President. There was simply not enough time to create new designs and models, get approvals, etc. and have the new coin in production by January, 1964. I strongly advocated the simplicity and directness of a profile portrait as being the best possible arrangement for a handsome, outstanding coin whose beauty would endure and there could be no doubt as to the identity of the subject.

Mrs. Kennedy's suggestions were carried out on the intermediate size and another trial die was made for the obverse. New trial strikes were prepared. Secretary of the Treasury Dillon wanted to see this second trial piece and on December 27th, I flew to West Palm Beach where the Secretary and Mrs. Dillon inspected the strikes. They both felt that Mrs. Kennedy's wishes had been complied with and in their opinion, the coin was very handsome. It was decided to proceed with tooling up for production. The Congressional Act authorizing the Kennedy Half Dollar was approved December 30, 1963.

Time was fast running out and if we did not have working dies for Proof Half Dollars, the coiner would be unable to start Proof coin production which meant that up until the time dies were available some thirty or fifty employees would be without work. Extreme pressure was exerted to push this program through and by January 2, 1964, Kennedy Half Dollar Proof dies were delivered and our tremendous Proof coin production could get started. Some minor problems still had to be ironed out for regular production but by January 30, 1964, Denver had started production of regular Half Dollar coinage using the new design. Sometime during the following week, the Philadelphia Mint started striking regular Half Dollar coinage.

On February 11, 1964, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Robert Wallace, Director of the Mint Eva Adams, Assistant Director of the Mint Fred Tate, Superintendent of the Mint Michael Sura and other Treasury and Mint officials held ceremonies concurrently at the Denver and Philadelphia Mints to commemorate the striking of the new U. S. Half Dollar bearing the late President's portrait and issued by a sorrowing nation as a fitting and enduring memorial honoring our former President, John F. Kennedy.

On March 5, 1964, an initial delivery of some twenty-six million of the new Kennedy Half Dollars was made to the Federal Reserve banks for eventual issue to the local banks and to the people of our country.

4/29/64

Frank Gasparo

THE KENNEDY HALF DOLLAR (REVERSE)

Shortly after President Kennedy's death, plans were being made to create a lasting and significant memorial to his memory. After careful consideration and various suggestions made throughout the nation, the final decision was made by Congress to make a coin with the late President's portrait on the obverse and an appropriate design on the reverse.

The Mint received word from the Bureau that President Kennedy's portrait on the U. S. Mint Presidential Inaugural List Medal executed by Gilroy Roberts and the Presidential Seal from the same medal on the reverse designed by me, were to be used for the coin; of course, with the necessary wording required for a coin. This same Presidential Seal incorporated in this medal was personally selected by the late President to be used for the reverse of the 1961 Inaugural medal.

Since time was limited and we at the Mint had on hand the Kennedy medal patterns, it was possible to proceed with haste with this coin. However, the models in plaster form had to be considerably lowered in relief and the basins or backgrounds of these plasters had to have the correct curvature and heights for coinage striking. The obverse and reverse lettering and borders necessary for coinage had to be executed and balanced for correct composition in relation to the center motifs.

While waiting for the final decision from Congress as to the denomination approved for coinage, I made three rough patterns incorporating the quarter, half dollar and the dollar lettering. On November 28, 1963, we received official word at the Mint from Miss Eva Adams, Director, to prepare our models for the Kennedy Half Dollar and we began our work the same day, and on December 12th we completed our trial dies. At 9:00 A. M. on December 13th we struck our first trial (pattern) pieces. Of course, mechanical difficulties in the way of production had to be worked out later in days to come. The same day, December 13th, I boarded a jet plane for Washington, D. C. to deliver the coins to Miss Adams, who in turn submitted them via Mr. Dillon, Secretary of the Treasury, to the White House and President Johnson.

As to my experiences with this reverse, I was fortunate to have my design accepted by Mrs. John F. Kennedy, the White House and the Treasury Bureau.

Errors on coins are keenly sought by coin enthusiasts and I had to make a very careful check of the heraldic symbols on the Presidential Seal. The American eagle in this seal must hold thirteen arrows in the (viewer's) right claw; thirteen leaves with thirteen olives in the branch in the (viewer's) left claw. The eagle's head is turned to the (viewer's) left facing the olive branch. Thirteen small stars are arranged behind the eagle's head. The shield in the center covers the eagle's breast and has seven vertical stripes. Finally, fifty stars encircle the center motif as in the official Presidential Seal.

This seal was the culmination of many experiences with the study and execution of the American eagle in medallic work. The manner I used in designing the composition of the reverse was pre-planned. Deliberately I sunk the eagle into the background so the circle of fifty stars around the eagle and the border lettering appeared to radiate from the center motif. The "E Pluribus Unum" was greatly enlarged in comparison to the official Presidential Seal so that it could be easily read by the naked eye.

Before the coin was acceptable, we had to make numerous steel reductions from model to coin size. Finally, coinage production was begun at 11:00 A. M. on February 11, 1964 amidst great excitement at the Philadelphia Mint and the Denver Mint simultaneously.

I had the good fortune to be with Miss Eva Adams, Mr. Wallace, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Sura, Superintendent of the Philadelphia Mint, other dignitaries, TV cameras, newsreel photographers and newspaper cameramen. Miss Adams gave the signal for the Philadelphia Mint and the Denver Mint (by telephone) to proceed with the coinage production of the Kennedy Half Dollar on a daily twenty-four hour basis.

WASHINGON DC  
DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

1964 MINT BUREAU

RECEIVED

# The Sidney Daily News

Sidney, Ohio, Saturday Evening, February 15, 1964



BRIGHT AND SHINY — Mrs. Margo Russell, executive editor of Coin World, at the left, looks on as Miss Eva Adams, director of the Bureau of the Mint, examines initial strikings of the new John F. Kennedy half-dollar at the Philadelphia Mint earlier this week. Miss Adams is shown in direct telephone conversation with the mint at Denver, Colo., where simultaneous strikings of the new coin were being made. The lower photograph shows the obverse and reverse of the new half-dollar.

## Dramatic Striking Of Kennedy Coin Described By Sidney Editor

(Editor's note — Earlier this week, Mrs. Margo Russell, executive editor of Coin World was invited to attend ceremonies in connection with the stamping of the first of the new Kennedy half-dollars at the Philadelphia Mint.

While in Philadelphia she also attended the meeting of the 1964 Assay Commission to which she had been appointed recently by President Lyndon Johnson.

In the story that follows, Mrs. Russell tells of her experiences at the first of these historic occasions, with the account of the assay commission meeting to follow early next week.)

BY MARGO RUSSELL

Last Tuesday I stepped high over snake-like black cables, ducked low beneath four intense television cameras, dodged flailing flash guns, and gave as good as I got in the elbow-to-the-rib technique so vital in a big-time press conference (this I learned the sharp way — and fast.)

Coin World was the only numismatic publication in the United States to be invited by Eva Adams, director of the Mint, to be represented at ceremonies surrounding the striking of the first John F. Kennedy half dollar in Philadelphia and Denver.

All of the major wire services of the nation, the major television and radio networks and a hand-picked group of reporters and photographers from metropolitan newspapers were invited, and carefully escorted by steely-eyed guards to the coining room of the Philadelphia Mint.

We had a top photographer of our own—Philadelphia Inquirer's crack man, Anthony Ricardi, who developed an affection for Coin World last year during a coin convention assignment, and took his day off to become Coin World's official photographer.

I had worked with Rick and knew his technique—he can out-smart and outshoot the best. He took the high road on his own for the photos, and I took the low road for the coverage.

Once I spotted him above the crowd, wrapped around a steel cable, high off the floor, for an angle shot of a coining press. So he literally took the high road. This is no small feat for Rick, who weighs over 200 pounds.

Coin World seemed to have several other advantages: First of all, because of our constant and intensive coverage of Mint activities, we knew the procedures, processes, the terminol-

ogy, the dignitaries and most of the background, thanks to an advance briefing by our good and thoughtful friend, Miss Adams.

Too, either chivalry is NOT dead or there is respect for grey hair among the gentlemen of the press. (Secretly I thought they had me confused with a member of Miss Adams' entourage because of her animated conversation with me.)

Anyway, the mob parted with our protest and allowed me to stand in the front row, two feet from the center of the ceremony.

The chugging coining presses quieted, one by one, throughout the long room. The Secret Service agents drew in closer. Countdown began. Miss Adams picked up the telephone which was directly connected with the Denver Mint where identical ceremonies were being held.

In her soft, musical voice, Miss Adams began:

"After President Kennedy's tragic death, thousands of Americans wrote to President Johnson, to the Secretary of the Treasury, and to the director of the Mint, recommending that the portrait of John F. Kennedy be placed on a United States coin.

"President Johnson subsequently asked Congress for legislation authorizing the Treasury Department to mint new 50-cent pieces with the likeness of the late president. Congress gave its approval and President Johnson signed the bill on Dec. 30, 1963.

"Today, we strike the first of the John Fitzgerald Kennedy half dollars to be used for general circulation purposes. Thus, the late President joins the list of his illustrious predecessors, whose portraits appear on our coins for regular use — Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt."

There was not a sound in the room except for the whirring of the movie cameras.

"No higher honor could come to me than this opportunity to preside over the first striking of the John Fitzgerald Kennedy half-dollar." Miss Adams continued, "for I know that in history he will take his place with the other great Presidents who appear on our coins."

Then she continued to explain that with her in Philadelphia was Robert W. Wallace, assistant secretary of the treasury, Michael Sura, superintendent of the Philadelphia Mint, and Gilroy Roberts, chief sculptor of the Mint, and Frank Gasparro, his assistant. Roberts and Gasparro designed the new half-dollar.

Standing by the Denver Mint were Byron G. Rogers, congressman from the first district of Colorado; Frederick W. Tate, assistant director of the Mint, and Mrs. Fern Miller, Denver Mint superintendent.

"Now we are ready to strike the first coins, and I would like to ask Secretary Wallace and Congressman Rogers to start the stamping presses on my signal," Miss Adams said.

"Are you ready, gentlemen? Please press the button and start the presses."

The giant flywheel revolved on the coining press, there was a sharp zing, and the first Kennedy half dollar gleamed beneath the bright lights.

Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Wallace held

it and then passed it to Mint Superintendent Sura. He adjusted a magnifying glass to inspect a quality.

"perfect," he said.

"I predict that this is the most beautiful coin of the century," said Wallace with emotion.

Miss Adams took the coin, and holding it by the edge so she would not leave fingermarks, inserted it into a polyethylene envelope.

It was then that she told the crowd, still quiet from the drama of the event, that the first coins would be carried by hand to the White House and presented to President Johnson.

He, in turn, would take the first four coins struck to Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy, Caroline and John Jr. The next few coins struck would go to the blood relatives of the slain president.

A few more coins were struck, both in Philadelphia and Denver, and then bedlam broke loose. Everybody wanted his picture first. For an hour the cameras flashed. Miss Adams repeated her speech for the television men, she answered questions, her staff answered questions, she posed with the coins, with the Mint and Treasury dignitaries, there were close-ups of the coins, of Miss Adams, of the coining presses. Nobody got a Kennedy half dollar, incidentally.

Later that night a small group of us sat in Miss Adams' suite at the Bellevue Stratford, eagerly waiting for the network television news programs, to watch their coverage. The coverage was thrilling and pleased Miss Adams very much.

"Let's go eat," she said. "Tomorrow's a big day."

We piled into cabs—Miss Adams, P. M. Williams, Ken Fairlor, Sid Carwile, all Bureau of the Mint personnel, Max and Clara Schermer, of Philadelphia (Max was a 1963 Assay Commissioner), and headed for the Old Bookbinder's Philadelphia famed restaurant.

Enroute we stopped to study the site of the new Philadelphia Mint to be erected in the shadow of Independence Hall within the next few years.

Later, tired from the long, historic day, well fed — everyone had giant platters of seafood — we said good night, to meet again the next day for another historic event — the 1964 Assay Commission meeting at the Philadelphia Mint.

But before we said goodnight, we checked on the safe arrival of Mrs. Miller and Mr. Tate who flew from Denver to Philadelphia after their morning ceremonies to be on hand for the Assay Commission meeting.

Next: We check the coins.

# **NOTICE**

Kennedy Half  
news item

We have a client who is in need of a large quantity of Brilliant Uncirculated John F. Kennedy Half Dollars.

These coins will be used by our client in a sales promotion package, as part of their 1964 Advertising Program, and either Denver or Philadelphia Mint halves are therefore acceptable. The only requirement is that they be Uncirculated 1964 Halves.

In order to comply with the deadlines of our client's advertising program, we will now offer to pay \$1135.00 per 100 roll bags (\$100 face value) of 1964 JFK Uncirculated half dollars, plus face value of charges. We will also agree to purchase a minimum of 75 bags through this Coin World advertisement, regardless of any quantity we may purchase through other sources. However, because this price would be considerably higher than that being offered elsewhere, we anticipate an immediate and heavy response and will NOT herein commit ourselves to the purchase of more than 75 bags at our \$1135.00 price.

We will purchase the FIRST 75 bags offered at

**PLEASE NOTE:**

1. We will pay \$1135.00 plus shipping charges for quantities of 100 or more rolls.
  2. We will guarantee to accept a minimum of 75 bags (7500 rolls). Most likely, we will be able to accept additional quantities.
  3. We will accept shipments of NOT LESS than 25 rolls at a price of \$11.35 per roll, postpaid.
  4. We want either Mint bags or bank wrapped rolls containing strictly Uncirculated halves ONLY. Coins picked out of circulation will be returned, postage collect, plus a handling charge.
  5. We will under no circumstances accept collect telephone calls, but we will reimburse you for telephone charges if we decline your shipment.
  6. We will accept either Philadelphia or Denver Mint coins. We will NOT pay more for one Mint than the other.
  7. We will NOT accept C.O.D. shipments.

this price and will almost certainly be willing to accept additional bags, but we do reserve the right to refuse all offers once we acquire the specified 75 bags.

In addition to purchasing full bags, we will accept bank wrapped rolls in less than bag quantities—but in MINIMUM lots of 25 rolls at a price of \$11.35 per roll shipped postpaid or express prepaid to our store address. We will NOT accept ANY shipment of less than 25 rolls nor can we pay shipping charges on shipments of less than 100 rolls.

If necessary, but only on shipments of 100 rolls or more, we will arrange for payment direct to your bank immediately upon proof of shipment. On shipments of LESS than 100 rolls, our check will be Air Mailed the day of receipt.

We will accept all shipments of at least 25 rolls, but less than 100 rolls which are shipped on or before May 11. (This ad copy was submitted to Coin World on April 29.) Such shipments may be made without prior notice, but less than bag quantities.

Made without prior notice, but less than bag quantities.

shipped after May 11 may be refused unless TELEPHONE confirmation is arranged.

Prior to shipping one or more full bags of holes (100 rolls or more), please telephone us to obtain our confirmation. This is necessary since we may have already purchased more than the 7500 rolls we presently require. We absolutely **WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY COLLECT CALLS**, but we will reimburse for your telephone charges if we decline to accept your shipment. If we accept the bag(s) you offer, then the telephone charges will be considered as your expense.

We regret that the demands of our regular mail order and retail store business make it impossible for us to correspond with you regarding the purchase of these 1964 BU halvers. Therefore, we will not be able to acknowledge any correspondence; all requests for confirmation must be made by TELEPHONE. Please do not write since we will be unable to answer your letter.

Paying **\$1135.00** per bag for JFK Halves.  
Either Denver or Philadelphia Mintage.

Either Denver or Philadelphia Mintage.

**WE ARE STILL SELLING JFK HALF DOLLARS**

Since we have reserved sufficient JFK halves to supply our mail order requirements, we also offer to sell BU rolls of John F. Kennedy 1964 half dollars at a price of \$137.50 per 10 roll lot.

We will not accept any orders at this price which specify either Philadelphia or Denver Mint. Our present inventory is mixed between the two Mints and we assume that any additional rolls we may purchase will similarly split between the two Mints. Therefore, if you are not willing to accept either Denver or Philadelphia, we must respectfully decline your buying order. However, we feel that at this low selling price, either mintage would represent a good buy. We must also decline orders to buy for quantities involving less than 100 rolls.



# JOURNAL

60 SIP AVE., DEPT. 106

COINS

INCORPORATED

# SQUARE

JERSEY CITY, N.J. 07306



I wonder if you are letting for the ~~the~~ - The Bobby Baker that is bound to be somewhere in the Treasury Department ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup> in the Federal Reserve Banks are the local Banks.

**Store Hours 9:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M. Sat. Thru Wed. 9:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M. Thurs. & Fri.**

**FRANK ROTH**

RG 104, entry UD, box 22 folder, "Kennedy Half"

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 4, 1964

Office of the White House Press Secretary

-----  
THE WHITE HOUSE

The first of the new John F. Kennedy half-dollars for general circulation purposes will be struck at the mints in Philadelphia and Denver on February 11, 1964.

Miss Eva Adams, Director of the Mint, said the Mint will produce 90,000,000 of the new half dollars during 1964. When 26,000,000 have been made they will be distributed through the Federal Reserve Banks to banks throughout the country and released to the public at face value in late March or early April. Thereafter, the new coins will be placed in circulation on a continuous basis as they are produced at the Mints.

The John F. Kennedy half-dollar was authorized by Congress in Public Law No. 88-256, approved by President Johnson on December 30, 1963. The face of the coin bears a portrait of the late President, facing left. Above and around the border is the word "Liberty". Beneath, and around the border is the date. Above the date and below the head is the motto "In God We Trust". The reverse of the coin contains a replica of the Presidential Coat of Arms. Above, and around the border are the words "United States of America". Below and around the border "Half Dollar". On the ribbon above the eagle's head are the words "E Pluribus Unum" (One Out of Many).

The models for both sides of the coin were prepared by the United States Mint. The Presidential likeness was done by Gilroy Roberts, Chief Sculptor of the Mint at Philadelphia, and the Presidential Coat of Arms was executed by his assistant, Frank Gasparro.

Individual specimens of the coin are not available from the Mints or the Federal Reserve Banks. They can be obtained by the public only through local banking sources.

# # # # #

RG 104, entry UD, box 22 folder, "Kennedy Half"

December 10, 1963

FOR RELEASE AT 12 NOON (EST)

NOTICE: There should be no premature release of this Message to the Congress, nor should its contents be paraphrased, alluded to or hinted at in earlier stories. There is a total embargo on this speech until 12:00 noon December tenth , which includes any and all references to any material in this message.

Pierre Salinger  
Press Secretary to the President

THE WHITE HOUSE

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

I hereby submit to the Congress a draft of a proposed bill which would provide for the coinage of 50-cent pieces with the likeness of the late John Fitzgerald Kennedy. With the adoption of this proposal each of the five denominations now being produced by the Mint, i.e., one-cent through fifty-cent pieces, would have the likeness of a President on the obverse of the coin.

The consent of the Congress is required to make this change in view of the provisions of section 3510 of the Revised Statutes, as amended (31 U.S.C. 276), which provides that no change in the design of a coin shall be made oftener than once in twenty-five years. The present design was adopted in 1948.

If the legislation is enacted, the Treasury Department plans to use the likeness of the late President Kennedy which is being used on a "Presidential series" medal now being manufactured and sold at the Philadelphia Mint. The design of this medal was approved personally by the late President. Mint artists would prepare an appropriate reverse for the coin.

I strongly recommend the enactment of this proposed legislation at the earliest possible date in order that the likeness of President Kennedy will appear on the 50-cent coins issued at the beginning of the calendar year 1964.

LYNDON B. JOHNSON

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
December 10, 1963

(OVER)

A BILL

To provide for the coinage of 50-cent pieces bearing the likeness of John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That in lieu of the coinage of the 50-cent piece known as the "Franklin half-dollar", there shall be coined a silver 50-cent piece which shall bear on one side the likeness of the late President of the United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, and on the other side an appropriate design to be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury.



TREASURY DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON 25

OFFICE OF  
DIRECTOR OF THE MINT

DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

NEW COIN TO HAVE PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S PORTRAIT

President Lyndon B. Johnson today asked Congress for legislation authorizing the Treasury Department to mint new fifty-cent pieces with the likeness of the late President John F. Kennedy.

The United States Mint, which operates under the direction of the Treasury Department, must have legislative authority to make this change since the present design of the Benjamin Franklin half-dollar piece has been in circulation less than 25 years. If the design of a coin has been in effect longer than this period the Treasury can, on its own, change this design.

Since the assassination of President Kennedy, many Americans have written requesting that his portrait be placed on a United States coin. If the Congress accedes to this spontaneous request, the new half-dollar pieces will have President Kennedy's portrait on the face of the coin and an adaptation of the Seal of the President of the United States as the central motif on the reverse side. Both the Seal and the portrait, which was sculptured by Gilroy Roberts, Chief Engraver of the United States Mint, appear on President Kennedy's commemorative medal. The new half-dollar will also carry the inscription LIBERTY, IN GOD WE TRUST and the year of coinage on its face, while on the reverse side will appear UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, HALF DOLLAR, and E PLURIBUS UNUM.

Several factors entered into the selection of the fifty-cent piece to carry the likeness of the late President: It is the only subsidiary coin that does not bear the portrait of a President; a new production of half-dollars had been scheduled to begin in January; more half-dollars could be struck than if the design were used on a silver dollar. Since there is a limited amount of silver held by the Treasury for coinage, the country would benefit by being able to put into circulation more than twice as many coins for the silver used. The cost of making a new coin would be nominal, since the design already exists and the work connected with making new dies would be accomplished within the Treasury Department.

The new fifty-cent pieces could be expected to be in circulation within several weeks after authorization.

1963

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

23643

Mr. Cohean with Mr. Diggs.  
Mr. Fascell with Mr. Roush.  
Mr. Rains with Mr. Rooney of Pennsylvania.  
Mrs. Griffiths with Mr. Hawkins.  
Mr. Teague of Texas with Mr. Barry.  
Mr. Abritt with Mrs. Hansen.  
Mr. Thompson of Texas with Mr. O'Brien of Illinois.  
Mr. Long of Louisiana with Mr. Leggett.  
Mr. Grant with Mrs. Kee.  
Mr. Thornberry with Mr. Shelley.

Mr. ASHLEY, Mr. KING of California, and Mr. UDALL changed their vote from "yea" to "nay."

Mr. ST. ONGE, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. ROGERS of Texas, and Mr. BROOMFIELD changed their vote from "nay" to "yea."

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE TO EXTEND  
REMARKS

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to extend their remarks in the RECORD on the conference report just agreed to.

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

RIVER BASIN AND FLOOD CONTROL  
PROJECT AUTHORIZATIONS

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent for the immediate consideration of a concurrent resolution.

The Clerk read the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 246), as follows:

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Clerk of the House of Representatives in the enrollment of the bill (H.R. 8667) authorizing additional appropriations for the prosecution of comprehensive plans for certain river basins, is authorized and directed—*

(1) On the first page, immediately after line 2, of the engrossed House bill, insert the following: "CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN FLORIDA".

(2) On the first page, immediately after line 8, of the engrossed House bill, insert the following: "BAZOS RIVER BASIN".

(3) On page 2, immediately after line 3, of the engrossed House bill, insert the following: "ARKANSAS RIVER BASIN".

(4) On page 2, immediately after line 9, of the engrossed House bill, insert the following: "WHITE RIVER BASIN".

(5) On page 2, immediately after line 15, of the engrossed House bill, insert the following: "OHIO RIVER BASIN".

(6) On page 2, immediately after line 21, of the engrossed House bill, insert the following: "LOS ANGELES-SAN GABRIEL RIVER BASIN".

(7) On page 3, immediately after line 2, of the engrossed House bill, insert the following: "COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN".

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

The House concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COINAGE OF JOHN FITZGERALD  
KENNEDY 50-CENT PIECES

Mr. PATMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 9413) to provide for the coinage of 50-cent pieces bearing the likeness of John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

The Clerk read as follows:

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That in lieu of the coinage of the 50-cent piece known as the Franklin half dollar, there shall be coined a silver 50-cent piece which shall bear on one side the likeness of the late President of the United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, and on the other side an appropriate design to be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury.*

The SPEAKER. Is a second demanded?

Mr. KILBURN. Mr. Speaker, I demand a second.

Mr. PATMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that a second be considered as ordered.

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. PATMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 5 minutes.

Mr. Speaker on December 10 President Johnson sent a message to Congress requesting legislation authorizing the mint to coin 50-cent pieces bearing the likeness of our late President John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

The bill recommended in the President's message specifies that the other side of the coin shall bear an appropriate design to be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury. This will mean, however, that the reverse side of the coin must carry the image of an eagle, because that is a requirement of existing law.

H.R. 9413 is the bill that President Johnson recommended. It has not been amended.

In his message President Johnson urged that the bill be enacted promptly, in order that 50-cent pieces issued at the beginning of the calendar year 1964 be the new coin carrying the likeness of John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

The reason for this is that the mint must make new dies and have them ready for use at the beginning of each new calendar year. In any case, this would be true if the mint were to continue to coin the present half dollar. Therefore, the expenses of converting the half dollar to the Kennedy half dollar would be a great deal higher if the mint did not do this at the beginning of the year. It would mean making two sets of new dies instead of only one set of new dies. Furthermore, to change dies twice would reduce the production capacity of the mints.

We have been advised by the Director of the Mint that the total cost of converting the 50-cent piece will be less than \$1,000. As I have said, new dies must be made in any case. Furthermore, the mint presently has in its possession the patterns that are to be used. So the only cost will be the cost of building a master die. The Director of the Mint

has computed the salary time of the die-makers and the overhead for the purpose.

I should like to add that, since President Kennedy's assassination, our committee has received a great many letters and telegrams from people in all parts of the country suggesting that a coin of one denomination or another be made to carry the image of John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

The country and the free world have lost a great man and a great President. The bill was reported unanimously by our committee. I respectfully suggest that it would be only fitting that the House pass it unanimously.

FACT SHEET ON KENNEDY COIN

Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of the Treasury has the full authority at the present time to change the design on any coin after it has been used for 25 years. Thus, it would be possible, without legislation, for the Secretary to place the likeness of John F. Kennedy on the nickel, the quarter, the silver dollar, or the obverse of the 1-cent coin. The decision to place the likeness of President Kennedy on the half dollar requires legislation because the present design was adopted in 1948. The President requested legislation to use the half dollar so that all of our coins in current production would bear the likenesses of Presidents of the United States.

Silver dollars are not currently being minted. The Treasury has requested the appropriation of funds to permit the resumption of production of silver dollars for the first time since 1935. However, the idea of placing President Kennedy's likeness on the silver dollar, when and if production of this coin is resumed, was rejected by the Treasury "because the expected demand for the Kennedy memorial coin would be so heavy as to cause a drain on the Treasury's silver stocks." So many silver dollars are now being saved and treasured as collectors' items that stocks of silver dollar, once considered adequate to last for many years, are rapidly being depleted. A Kennedy silver dollar, it was feared, would aggravate the shortage of silver dollars because of their appeal to collectors or to individuals wanting to have a new coin as a memento of the late President.

Kennedy half-dollars undoubtedly would appeal to the collector instinct in many Americans but would go "twice as far" in meeting the demand for mementos while providing coins for general circulation. Production of the new coin is estimated about 60 million pieces per year. No special costs will be incurred in producing the new half-dollar, since it will be regular issue coinage. The design and dies can be adapted quickly from the Kennedy Presidential Medal, so that the new issue can be available for 1964 regular issue if the legislation is passed promptly. The coins will be distributed from the Denver and Philadelphia Mints to the 36 Federal Reserve banks and to the Main Treasury in Washington, thence to the 14,000 commercial banks throughout the country.

1963

## CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — HOUSE

23645

and admiration as a distinguished American, but the rash of memorials all at one time makes the effectiveness of this type of legislation and dignity attached to it almost meaningless. Let us honor the late President with proper memorials.

Let us provide for these memorials so that the honor and tribute we pay to the late President has the proper effect. The only way we can do that is to hold back on some of these memorials that are being suggested in such great number.

I understand that the Senate and House committees have come out with the new cultural center in memory of our late President, and we have had all kinds of suggestions for changes in the names of streets, towns, cities, villages, and so on. I think we are losing the real effect of these memorials if we start passing this kind of legislation in such tremendous haste.

Mr. PATMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. MOORHEAD].

(Mr. MOORHEAD asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MOORHEAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation. As a matter of fact, on November 29 of this year I introduced a bill, H.R. 9295, which would direct and authorize the Mint at the earliest practicable time to produce 50-cent pieces bearing the likeness of the late President Kennedy.

Mr. Speaker, I share the thoughts of the previous speaker that we should not act too hastily and in too many different fields. However, there is precedent for this action in issuing a commemorative coin. In the year following the death of President Roosevelt, a coin bearing his likeness was issued and is still in circulation.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a proper action for this Congress to take, and I urge my colleagues to vote favorably for it.

Mr. KILBURN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. HALL].

Mr. HALL. Mr. Speaker, I oppose this bill at this time pending the report of an oft called for commission, which should be created by this Congress, to deal with the challenging but rewarding task of establishing proper memorials. These would then truly be the prized possession of all Americans—and people everywhere—rather than an action completed under the guise of mass psychological hysteria, or predicated upon snap judgment. For example, if the President can change the name of a local land mass or area as he did in the case of Cape Canaveral, why do we in the House of Representatives necessarily act precipitously on a deflated half dollar coin?

I commend the speech addressed to this House on December 12 1963, by the gentleman from Maryland, the Honorable ROGERS MORTON, in this connection. Similarly I commend to your timely consideration and ultimate judgment, a speech by his brother the Honorable U.S. Senator THRUSTON B. MORTON, of Kentucky, on the floor of the other body on the same date. To paraphrase the

latter in part, "the soul, people, and future of America is sound. The cause, and the way of America is sound. Let these not be barred and blocked by those who forget that the great business of the Nation must be threshed in healthy discussion, in spirited debate, and in the great dialog of open dissent and open society. Cry heresy at such debate today, as some seem to cry, and we would memorialize tyranny and not liberty."

This Nation's genius is that our parties and our Government is greater than any one individual, recognizing the sobering thought that what is wrong prior to a catastrophe as horrendous as it may be, is equally wrong thereafter, and is not changed by the act itself. The business of Congress must be carried forward by the judgment of its membership faithful to the lessons of yesterday but fashioned for today and tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, America will rise above the perversion that "all are guilty" and the attempt of the ultra liberals to make "all" apply to the body of conservatives, plus the realization that guilt is never collective but personal. The implication of the radical leftist will backfire against them. It is because we are in this state of dire uncertainty and unstable emotional situation that I would prefer to defer this act of coinage from the same year that we have demonetized the silver from our bank notes. As reported only this week by the First National Bank of New York the 50-cent piece does not have its full measure of silver therein, only the 5-cent piece—nickel—does, according to the latest silver values as computed from world resources and markets. Could this be related to its origin in the Bull Moose Party?

Further, I believe the last line of the bill as presented, and the last sentence of page 1 of the report of the committee is too inclusive and allocates too much authority to the Secretary of the Treasury. I ask Mr. Speaker are the words "In God We Trust" to be struck from this coinage on the obverse side because we herein authorize "an appropriate design to be prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury," in the same year that this House has insisted we place "In God We Trust" above the Speaker's dais? I respectfully recommend that this action be defeated and/or brought out by the Banking and Currency Committee after a period of dignified mourning for a gracious human being, made more intense by virtue of the treachery of his end.

Mr. Speaker, I reflect sadly at the fate of Benjamin Franklin who at the time of the Constitutional Convention was admittedly the most erudite of all our Founding Fathers, and was in fact the only one who had traveled in European capitals and reflected on history toward our evolution. Is he to be stricken from the coinage and at some future date are we setting the precedent for removing the Father of our Country from other coins? I say strike not one hair of this venerable head, and let us continue our coins as means of barter and not as memorabilia to other than Founding Fathers. This action is too soon, and

to precipitous, and we need time for history and historians to decide and record. I believe the Banking and Currency Committee—which in this House's past action has been established to aid and abet the Ways and Means function assigned to the House of Representatives by the Constitution—has wisely acted in pondering and studying for long periods of time the various bills and resolutions for similar coinage memorializing, for example, the Honorable Sam Rayburn, immediate past Speaker of this House. Here history has had time to work its will and make just and timely decisions. Are we not surreptitious in leapfrogging such pious and judicious decisions? If it is right to so memorialize on coin our immediate past Presidents, it will be correct later on; yet just as much regretted if we act in haste whereas it is in truth a wrong concept. We will have demonstrated wisdom rather than lack of reverence in so acting. As a physician recognizing mass hysteria and psychological reaction when I see it, I strongly recommend that this be deferred by a negative vote or sent back to the committee with instructions to ponder and bring it forth after the conclusion of our national period of mourning and the first of next year.

Mr. KILBURN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FULTON].

Mr. FULTON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I am glad to say that I favor this legislation for a memorial coin because President Kennedy was the President of all of us in the United States. He is a martyred President. We all are saddened and mourn his passing. As we Americans must, we should debate this legislation, but I request that we should debate this memorial bill with reverence and likewise with respect. When Jack Kennedy served in this House, many of us valued his friendship, and are deeply saddened over his death, at the height of his competence and career. I must say that President and Mrs. Kennedy never forgot their old friends. We in the House have lost a true and loyal friend.

Might I ask the chairman of the Committee on Banking and Currency, because I have a bill in requiring that U.S. coins and stamps have the phrase "In God We Trust" on them, will the words "In God We Trust" that now appear on the 1963 50-cent piece and on the 1963 quarter be placed on this memorial coin for President Kennedy? I would strongly recommend it.

Mr. PATMAN. I call the gentleman's attention to the committee report.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the committee report at the conclusion of the remarks of the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. PATMAN. The report says:

Under the statute of 1792, all gold and silver coins (not 1-cent pieces and nickels) must carry on the reverse side the image of an eagle. And under the law of July 11, 1955, all coins must carry the legend "In God We Trust."

RG 104 RECORDS OF THE U.S. MINT

CENTRAL FILES, 1898-1988

231.06

to

231.07

Box 22

RG 104, entry UD "Central Files" box 22, folder "Kennedy Half"

NN3-104-00-001



RG 104, entry UD, box 22 folder, "Kennedy Half"



RG 104, entry UD, box 22 folder, "Kennedy Half"

*7 files Kennedy Coins*

THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, THURSDAY MORNING, JANUARY 1

## Kennedy Coin Designed Here

By ERIC D. BLANCHARD

The new John F. Kennedy half-dollar, scheduled for production this month, is the design of a man who builds telescopes in his spare time and an associate who designed Mummers costumes as a youth.

Both Gilroy Roberts, chief engraver at the U. S. Mint here, and his assistant, Frank Gasparro, are pleased to have been the designers of the memorial coin.

Roberts, head designer since 1947, has drawn the profile of the late President which will appear on the "head" of the coin. Gasparro drew up the Presidential seal, which will be on the reverse side.

### PRODUCTION DUE SOON

The coin is an adaption of the Kennedy President's Medal. They expect to start production

by the middle of the month. Public distribution may be delayed until May 29, the late President's birthday, however.

When it is issued, the coin will be in the "rarity" class, even if three or four hundred million are produced this year,

As many as 100 million of the first-year issue may never be in circulation, he estimated.

The new 50-cent piece will replace the Benjamin Franklin half-dollar, first issued in 1948. Law requires that changes in a coin in circulation less than 25 years have Congressional approval. It was given before Congress adjourned.

### FINISHED FRANKLIN COIN

Roberts and Gasparro were "naturals" for the job of designing the new coin.

Roberts, 58, of Upper Darby, married and the father of a grown son, was himself the son of artistic parents. He joined the Mint here in 1936 and, except for a few years at Washington's Corcoran Art School, he has been here since. Building telescopes is one of his many avocations.

He inherited the job of completing the design of the Frank-

lin 50-cent piece, when his predecessor at the Mint died, and did all the lettering on that coin himself. He also worked on the Franklin D. Roosevelt dime, first issued in 1946.

### MET MR. KENNEDY

Roberts met Mr. Kennedy once, shortly after his inauguration, when she took a model of the Presidential medal to Washington for the subject's inspection.

The late President withheld comment at first.

"He asked me, 'What do you think of it?'"

"I said I believed that some things might be changed. Photos are not always true reproductions. He thought he liked it — and we didn't have to bring it back."

Some "slight alterations" were made. With some simplification, due to the smaller size of the new coin, what President Kennedy liked at that meeting will be preserved on the memorial half-dollar.

### MUSICAL FAMILY

Gasparro, 54, a Manoa resident met Mr. Kennedy but was associated with him in one way: the bronze "With Appreciation" token the President used as a memento was the product of Gasparro's handiwork.

Gasparro was born in South



"Shh—I think I just saw a deer."

Philadelphia to a violinist's stead: for the last three years he has been a judge in the comic division of the annual parade,

He freelanced at monuments, portraits and in plaster until 1942, when he got a job at the Mint.

Gasparro has taught sculpture part-time for 16 years, at the Fleisher Art Memorial, where he studied as a boy.

The experience he gained designing Mummers costumes in his youth stood him in good

W  
M  
S  
WII  
Plans  
the N  
Wilke  
Satur  
Wedn  
and I  
son the  
port  
will  
Cole  
milli  
Cent  
John  
last  
Far  
legc

TO

P

tou

vie

loc

ing

er

ar

ai

ts

ar

gt

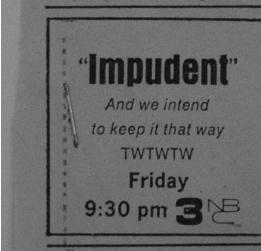
## "Impudent"

And we intend  
to keep it that way

TWTWTW

Friday

9:30 pm 3 NB





(AP Wirephoto)

### FIRST KENNEDY COINS STRUCK

Robert W. Wallace, assistant secretary of the treasury, and Miss Eva Adams, director of the mint, display first four John F. Kennedy half dollars minted at Philadelphia Tuesday. Miss Adams holds telephone, in contact with Denver, which also struck coins at same time. First four coins from each mint will be presented to Kennedy family by President Johnson. Public distribution will start late in March or early April.

### Kennedy Half Dollars Start Rolling

Director of the Mint Eva Adams, at right, and Robert Wallace, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, display some of the first John F. Kennedy half dollars to roll off

the dies at the Philadelphia Mint yesterday. Miss Adams signaled the Denver Mint by telephone to start making the new coins at the same moment.

WEDNESDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 12, 1964



The face and the reverse side of the new John F. Kennedy half dollars, to honor the late President, being struck at the Philadelphia and Denver Mints. They will be released to the public in late March or April.

## First Kennedy Coins Made

The first new half dollars, bearing the likeness of the late President John F. Kennedy, were struck Tuesday at simultaneous ceremonies at the Philadelphia and Denver Mints. During the brief ceremonies, linked by a telephone hookup, four new silver coins were struck at both mints.

They will be sent to the White House where President Johnson will present them to Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy and her children, Caroline and John.

Attending the exercises here, which began at 11 A. M., were Miss Eva Adams, Director of the Bureau of the Mint; Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Robert W. Wallace, and Michael Sura, superintendent of the Philadelphia Mint.

At Denver were Frederick W. Tate, assistant director of the Bureau, Rep. Byron G. Rogers (D., Colo.), of the First Congressional District of Colorado, and Mrs. Fern Miller, superintendent of the Denver Mint.

### BUTTON STARTS PRESSES

Wallace pressed the button here to start the stamping presses and Congressman Rogers did the same in Denver.

Both Miss Adams and Wallace hailed the stamping of the new Kennedy half dollars as an historic occasion.

The new coins honor President Kennedy who "inspired Americans and free men everywhere to strive more nobly for the ideals of a democratic society," Wallace said.

"By placing his likeness on a circulating coin he joins the



Michael Sura (left), superintendent of the Philadelphia Mint, and Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Robert W. Wallace examine first new Kennedy half dollar to come off the stamping machine.

company of four other beloved Presidents so honored, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, Franklin D. Roosevelt and George Washington."

### TO MAKE 90 MILLION

Miss Adams said she was "so proud of everyone who had anything to do with the new half dollar."

Sura said production of the Kennedy half dollars would begin immediately. During this year the Mint will produce 90 million of them to replace the Franklin half dollar which was first minted in 1948.

When 26 million of them are made, they will be distributed to banks throughout the country and released to the public in late March or in April.

### DESIGNED AT PHILA.

The face of the coin bears a portrait of President Kennedy, facing left. Above and around the border is the word "Liberty," and beneath and around the border is the date. Above the date are the words "In God We Trust." The reverse of the coin contains a replica of the Presidential Coat of Arms. Above and around the border are the words "United States of America." Below and around the border is written "Half Dollar," and the ribbon above the eagle's head bears the words, "E Pluribus Unum" (One Out of Many).

The Presidential likeness was done by Gilroy Roberts, chief sculptor of the Philadelphia Mint, and the Presidential Coat of Arms was executed by his assistant, Frank Gasparro.